

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DATE : 05 JAN 2017

DAY : Thursday

DENR

IN THE NEWS

NEWS

Pollution, squatting, ind hasten death of Laguna

TROUBLED WATERS With the Metro Manila skyline as backdrop, fish pens are among the serious threats confronting Laguna de Bay for decades. —PHOTOS

In Laguna, only towns with slaughterhouses and the bigger cities own treatment facilities. In Rizal, except for San Mateo, a concession area of Manila Water, none of the lakeshore towns has its own treatment facility.

"I'm so frustrated that we're building so many roads like there's no tomorrow (yet) we're not building septage tanks. That's just like putting on make-up without taking a shower first," Luna said.

Lake death

"One thing that people have to understand is that all lakes have a life cycle. The more rain carves into the soil and pushes that soil into the lake, the faster it will go. Eventually, all lakes will die," she said.

It is now a matter of "delaying considerably" the deterioration for the lake to be used for generations to come, she said.

Presented with the government's solutions, fish pen operators and fishermen welcomed the interventions but cast doubts on their implementation.

Charlie Tan, a fish pen operator at Binangonan town in Rizal, said the aquaculture industry could coexist with ecotourism ventures with traders willing to invest in restaurants or resorts around the lake.

But Fernando Hicap of Pamantasan ng Lakas ng Mamanlalakaya, a national group of fishermen, said the government should prioritize the welfare of

poor fishermen over business and ecotourism.

Acosta said: "To have a business-as-usual attitude and approaches [in solving the problems of Laguna de Bay] is just really going to be unsustainable." INQ

INQ

WATCH THE VIDEO

<http://inq.news/LagunaLake1>

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Metro Manila pollution level higher on New Year's Day

By ELIZABETH MARCELO

Recorded a level of air pollution in Metro Manila during the last New Year's Day revelry, compared to 2016.

The DENR Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) said its six air quality monitoring stations in Metro Manila recorded high particulate matter of 2.5 (PM 2.5), an indication of high air pollution, starting midnight of Jan. 1, 2017.

Particulates are the deadliest form of air due to their ability to penetrate deep into the lungs and blood stream, causing permanent DNA mutations, heart attack and premature death, according to the World Health Organization.

The Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999 sets the healthy guideline value for total suspended particulates (TSP), one of the measures for air pollution, at 230 ug/Ncm per day.

The monitoring station at

De La Salle University on Taft Avenue, Manila recorded a PM of 448 ug/Ncm (micrograms per normal cubic meter of air) as of 12 a.m. on Jan. 1, 2017 compared to 385 ug/Ncm on Jan. 1, 2016.

The station in Parañaque recorded 433 ug/Ncm compared to 307 ug/Ncm on Jan. 1 last year while the station at Ateneo de Manila University in Quezon City listed 369 ug/Ncm on Jan. 1, 2017 from 184

ug/Ncm on Jan. 1, 2016.

The Taguig station recorded 324 ug/Ncm on Jan. 1, 2017 from 117 ug/Ncm on Jan. 1, 2016; Valenzuela station, 285 ug/Ncm from 237 ug/Ncm; and Muntinlupa station, 175 ug/Ncm from 110 ug/Ncm.

"Before the bell rang for 2017, the air quality remained stable, but it gradually spiked up by midnight," Environment Undersecretary Arturo Valdez said in a press conference.

Valdez said while there was a slight drizzle on the evening of Dec. 31, 2016, the weather improved by midnight, enabling merry-makers to light up their firecrackers.

"Last year, it was raining the whole night. This year there was no rain. That mainly contributed to the higher level of air pollution this year," he said.

He added the level of air pollution has been slowly going down since Jan. 2.

Meanwhile, Valdez expressed the DENR's full support for the Department of Health's proposal for a total firecracker ban.

"We are supportive of the efforts of the DOH to fully ban the use and sale of firecrackers during New Year," he said.

He noted that although they have yet to receive full reports from provincial stations or areas where firecracker use was totally banned during New Year, Davao City has recorded lower level of air pollution.

THE STANDARD

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Revelry caused 'very dangerous' MM pollution

By Anna Leah E. Gonzales

HIGH pollution levels hit major cities in Metro Manila as millions celebrated the start of the new year last Sunday, the Environment department said yesterday.

Based on the data gathered from various air quality monitoring stations in the metropolis, many of the cities were monitored as severely polluted during the early hours of Sunday.

As of 12 a.m. of Jan. 1, the monitoring station at the De La Salle University in Manila recorded a PM2.5 level of 448 micrograms per normal cubic meter (ug/Ncm), while pollution levels in the cities of Parañaque, Taguig, Valenzuela and Muntinlupa were 433, 324, 285 and 175 ug/Ncm, respectively.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources said that PM2.5, is a micro particle matter that causes hazardous smog, was a major pollutant.

As of 2 a.m. of the same day, the air quality monitoring stations in Pasig City and the Ateneo de Manila University in Quezon City recorded PM2.5 levels of 397 and 369 ug/Ncm, respectively.

The PM2.5 levels in the cities mentioned fall under the category of extremely dangerous.

DENR said this means it is no longer deemed safe to go outside without wearing a face mask.

The healthy guideline values for PM2.5 is 25 ug/Ncm annually and 50 ug/Ncm for 24-hour averaging.

DENR said, however, all stations have registered higher levels of PM2.5 compared to last year's festivities.

On regular days, however, such as in the month of April 2015, PM2.5 readings in selected air quality monitoring stations are generally lower values: DLSU with 7 to 182 ug/Ncm; Parañaque, 6 to 18 ug/Ncm; and Muntinlupa with 8 to 42 ug/Ncm.

The DENR attributed the high pollution levels to the continued use of fireworks and firecrackers by New Year revellers.

"This was the reason why DENR has been supportive of the proposed ban on firecrackers and pyrotechnics display," said Assistant Director Jacqueline Caanan, officer-in-charge, at the Environmental Management Bureau.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Air quality in NCR worsened during New Year revelry

DESPITE the campaign against firecrackers, air quality in Metro Manila worsened during the revelry welcoming the New Year, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) reported.

According to the DENR Environmental Management Bureau (EMB), air quality monitoring stations in Metro Manila for particulate matter 2.5 (PM 2.5) registered slightly higher levels of pollution on New Year's Eve.

At midnight of January 1, 2017, the air quality monitoring station at De La Salle University (DLSU) Taft, Manila, recorded levels of 448 ug/Ncm; Parañaque, with 433 ug/Ncm; Taguig, with 324 ug/Ncm; Valenzuela, with 285 ug/Ncm; and Muntinlupa, with 175 ug/Ncm.

Meanwhile, as of 2 a.m. of January 1, the air quality monitoring station at the Ateneo de Manila University in Quezon City recorded levels of 369 ug/Ncm and 397 ug/Ncm at Pasig City.

Healthy guideline values for PM 2.5 is at 25 ug/Ncm annually, and 50 ug/Ncm for 24-hour averaging. All stations have registered higher levels of PM 2.5 compared to last year's festivities.

On regular days, however, such as the month of April 2015, PM 2.5 readings recorded in selected air quality monitoring stations are generally lower values in the ranges as follows: DLSU, with 7 to 182 ug/Ncm; Parañaque, with 6 to 18 ug/Ncm; Muntinlupa, with 8 to 42 ug/Ncm. DENR-EMB In-Charge, Office of the Director and Concurrent Assistant Director Jacqueline Caanacan said.

The DENR-EMB regional offices regularly monitors fine particulates, such as PM 2.5, along with other pollutants present in the air.

The DENR supports all efforts to reduce

the use of firecrackers during the New Year's Eve celebration, as it significantly affects the air pollution situation in the country. Experts have advised that particles in PM 2.5 are able to travel deeply into a person's respiratory tract and can cause short-term health effects and worsen medical conditions of people with asthma or heart disease, Caanacan added.

Air pollution accounts for one in eight deaths worldwide—approximately 7 million deaths in 2012, according to new data from the World Health Organization (WHO). The findings, released in late March, doubled previous estimates from just a few years ago in 2008. The WHO now characterizes air pollution as "the world's largest single environmental health risk".

The EMB-National Capital Region (NCR) operates and maintains 13 air quality monitoring stations in Metro Manila. For Quezon City, Manila and Valenzuela City, these are maintained by the EMB-Central Office.

These stations are in the following areas: Hall of Justice, Open Ground, Marikina City Hall; Caloocan City Hall Annex, North Caloocan; Don Bosco Barangay Hall, Parañaque City; Pateros Elementary School, San Pedro; Pateros; Malabon Polytechnic Institute; Malabon City; Navotas City; Hall M Naval Street, Navotas City; Rohm and Hass Warehouse Compound, CAA Road, Las Pinas City; Bilibid open ground compound, Muntinlupa City; TUP, Taguig Campus; East Service Road, Western Bicutan, Taguig City; Danny Florp Street, Oranbo; Pasig City; Plaza Hardin, Martinez Highway, Addition Hill; Mandaluyong City; PAL Compound, Pasay City; and Pinaglabanan Shrine along Pinaglabanan Street, San Juan City. Jonathan L. Mayuga



PILIPINO MIRROR

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AMIN NG KATOTOHANAN

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

POLUSYON SA HANGIN SA METRO TUMAAS

INIHAYAG ng Department of Interior and Local Government (DENR) na tumaas ang antas ng polusyon sa hangin sa pagsalubong ng Bagong Taon sanhi ng paggamit ng mga paputok.

Ayon kay DENR Environment Management Bureau (EMB) in-charge assistant director Jacqueline Caancan, batay sa kanilang monitoring stations sa Metro Manila ay tumaas ang Particulate Matter 2.5 o PM na nagtutukoy sa taas ng polusyon sa hangin.

Ang maituturing na ligtas pa ay na PM2.5 ay dapat nasa 25 Ug/Ncm kada taon at 50 Ug/Ncm sa loob ng 24 oras.

Marami sa mga lungsod sa Metro Manila ay umakyat ang lebel ng polusyon nang maghiwalay ang taon noong araw ng Linggo.

Sa monitoring station ng DENR sa may De La Salle University sa Maynila ay nakapagtalala sa Particulate Matter 2.5 level ng 448 micrograms per normal cubic meter (Ug/Ncm) habang ang polusyon ng hangin sa Parañaque ay nasa 433; Taguig ay nasa 324, Valenzuela ay nasa 285 at sa Muntinlupa ay nasa 175 Ug/Ncm.

Habang ang kalidad ng hangin sa area ng Pasig City na nasa PM2.5 level ay nasa 397 Ug/Ncm at sa Ateneo de Manila University

mga nabanggit na lungsod ay nasa kategorya ng lubhang mapanganib.

Nangangahulugan lamang na hindi ligtas na lumabas ng bahay nang walang face mask o takip ang ilong at bibig sanhi ng tindi ng polusyon.

Kung ikukumpara sa regular na araw at walang okasyon, mababala lamang ang naitatalang PM2.5 level sa mga nabanggit na lugar.

Maituturing na mas mataas ang antas ng polusyon sa hangin ngayong pagpasok ng 2017 kumpara sa taong 2016.

Ikinatwiran ni Caancan na ang patuloy na paggamit ng mga paputok ng publiko tuwing sasapit ang Bagong Taon ay nagiging sanhi ng pagtaas ng antas ng polusyon sa hangin.

Tinukoy pa ni Caancan na mapanganib sa kalusugan ang mga nasisinghot na hangin na may halong pulbura ng mga paputok na nakakaapekto sa baga o respiratory ng tao lalo na sa mga may hika o may sakit sa puso.

Muling iginiit ng DENR na suportado nila ang pagbawas at tuluyang hindi na paggamit ng mga paputok tuwing sasapit ang Bagong Taon.

Sa kasalukuyan ay may 13 air quality monitoring stations ang DENR sa Metro Manila

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SA PAGSALUBONG SA BAGONG TAON
MM may pinaka-maruming hangin -- DENR

Pinakamatindi ang polusyon sa hangin sa Metro Manila sa pagsalubong ng Bagong Taon noong December 31, 2016.

Ayon ito sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) batay sa isinagawang air monitoring ng DENR sa kalidad ng hangin noong New Years Eve.

Ayon sa Environmental Management Bureau ng DENR, ang air pollution sa Maynila ay umabot sa 448 micro gram per under normal level, 433 microgram sa Parañaque, 324 microgram sa Taguig, 285 microgram sa Valenzuela at 175 microgram sa Muntinlupa.

Ayon kay Asst. Dir. Jacqueline Caancan ng Environmental Management Bureau, di hamak na mas mataas ang air pollution sa pagsalubong sa bagong taon kung ikukumpara ito sa mga nagdaang taon.

Sinabi ni Caancan, mas maraming gumamit ng mga fountain o pailaw dahil na rin sa matinding kampanya ng pamahalaan kontra paputok kaya't mas tumindi naman ang usok na likha nito na nagpatingkad sa polusyon sa hangin.

Dahil dito, pag-aaralan ng DENR na irekomenda sa DILG na isama rin sa mga ipagbabawal at kampanya ang paggamit ng mga pailaw tuwing New Year para sa kapakanan ng kalusugan ng mamamayan. (Angie dela Cruz)

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DENR pushes for total ban on firecrackers

HIGH pollution levels hit major cities in Metro Manila at the start of the New Year last Sunday.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said that PM2.5, a micro particle matter that causes hazardous smog, was a major pollutant.

Based on the data gathered from various air quality monitoring stations in the metropolis, many of the cities were monitored as severely polluted during the early hours of the New Year.

As of 12 a.m. of Janu-

High level smog hit MM in New Year

ary 1, the monitoring station at the De La Salle University (DLSU) in Manila recorded a PM2.5 level of 448 micrograms per normal cubic meter (ug/Ncm), while pollution levels in the cities of Paranaque, Taguig, Valenzuela and Muntinlupa were 433, 324, 285 and 175 ug/Ncm, respectively.

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Manila University in Quezon City recorded PM2.5 levels of 397 and 369 ug/Ncm, respectively.

The PM2.5 levels in the cities mentioned fall under the category of extremely dangerous, meaning, it is no longer safe to go outside without wearing a face mask.

The healthy guideline values for PM2.5 is 25 ug/Ncm annually and 50 ug/Ncm for 24-hour averaging. All stations have registered higher levels of

PM2.5 compared to last year's festivities.

On regular days, however, such as in the month of April 2015, PM2.5 readings in selected air quality monitoring stations are generally lower: DLSU with seven to 182 ug/Ncm; Paranaque, six to 18 ug/Ncm; and Muntinlupa with eight to 42 ug/Ncm.

The DENR attributed the high pollution levels to the continued use of fireworks and firecrack-

ers by New Year revelers.

This was precisely the reason why the DENR has been supportive of the proposed ban on firecrackers and pyrotechnics display, according to Assistant Director Jacqueline Caancan, officer-in-charge at the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB).

Air pollution accounts for one in eight deaths worldwide - approximately, seven million deaths in 2012, according to latest data from the World Health Organization (WHO). **Cory Martinez and Jun Legaspi**

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DENR'S BILLION-PESO AIR MONITORING SCAM

ENVIRONMENT and Natural Resources Secretary Gina Lopez has been pressed by environmental, consumer and commuter groups for the immediate audit and no-nonsense investigation on what they alleged as anomalies in "roughly billion pesos worth of air monitoring equipment purchases."

These same groups claimed that the alleged anomalous purchases made by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources negatively impacts on what they also said as massive inaccuracies in DENR's 'real time' air quality monitoring reports to the Filipino people that are supposedly being issued regularly by its Environmental Management Bureau (EMB).

These revelations came about after the recent New Year's eve celebration when officials of the Coalition of Clean Air Advocates of the Philippines (CCAAP) and the United Filipino Consumers and

Commuters (UFCC) revealed an unhealthy and hazardous air quality forecast for Metro Manila based on New Year's celebration aftermath air quality monitoring made by EMB.

"This is a clear case of graft and corruption. We are questioning a total of roughly a billion pesos worth of purchases of air quality monitoring instruments or equipment by DENR (in a given period of time) after discovering that these same air monitors were purchased at the gross disadvantage of the Philippine government," UFCC President Rodolfo "RJ" Javellana said.

He said further: "We are also questioning the motive behind the past actions of some EMB officials in deciding to purchase these certain types (DOAS) of air monitors despite evidences gathered that these same air quality monitor types may either be obsolete or was al-

GOOD RIDDANCE

by ARLIE CALALO

ready phased out years ago before it purchased them.

Worst is the fact that we also discovered that most of these expensive air monitor instruments (purchased for nationwide use by DENR) currently are not properly working and some are even not functional anymore."

According to CCAAP technical consultant Emmanuel Galvez, "EMB purchased a Differential Optical Absorption Spectroscopy or a DOAS system.

This is a type of air quality monitoring system classified as long path devices (measures absorption along a path and not a specific point) in contrast to the commonly used point monitoring system worldwide."

"The DOAS system is not suit-

ed for use in the Philippine setting based on our country's unique needs in monitoring our air quality.

Even in the United States there are almost no installations that use a DOAS system for air quality monitoring due to the fact that it is expensive and limited in its usefulness," he said.

The UFCC and CCAAP said: "We again are now appealing to Secretary Lopez to immediately and seriously investigate all these allegations concerning the purchase of roughly a billion pesos worth of air quality monitors as we are determined to seek legal actions before the Office of the Ombudsman against those who might be involved whether by acts of commission or even acts of omission."

Daily Tribune

WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOR

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STRATEGIC

System clean-up

SERVICE

Here's to remind Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Gina Lopez that environmental protection is not all about mining. It concerns the whole world we live in including the air we breathe and incidentally, the means by which we fight to help it clean.

Right after the atmosphere was again smothered in gargantuan proportions of pollutants courtesy of fireworks exploded in welcoming 2017, officials of the Coalition of Clean Air Advocates of the Philippines (CCAAP) and the United Filipino Consumers and Commuters bared an alleged anomalous purchase perpetrated by the Environment Management Bureau (EMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources amounting to about a billion pesos.

According to CCAAP technical consultant Emmanuel Galvez "EMB purchased a Differential Optical Absorption Spectroscopy or a DOAS system. Which cost the taxpayers a cool billion pesos.

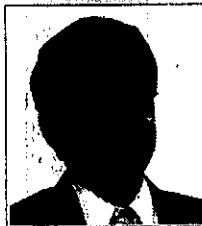
The DOAS (dedicated outdoor air system), Galvez said, is a type of air quality monitoring system classified as long path devices (measures absorption along a path and not a specific point) in contrast to the commonly used point monitoring system worldwide.

Air pollution monitoring, Galvez avers, is about the concept of exposure and the question that needs to be answered is how much exposure a person is being subjected to? And contrary to the DOAS system, a point monitoring system which is now widely used, emulates the action of the human body.

Therefore, the reading from a point monitor is exactly what the human body would be exposed to as if that human being were breathing the air at the monitoring station."

Galvez explains the DOAS system is not suited for use in the Philippine setting based on our country's unique needs in monitoring our air quality. Even in the United States there are almost no installations that use a DOAS system for air quality

INSIDE CONGRESS



Charlie O. Manalo

Actually, Galvez said that as early as two years ago, they have raised the concern regarding the use of the DOAS when they wrote then DENR secretary Ramon Paje. Unfortunately, nothing came out of their complaint, Galvez laments.

A few months back, Galvez said their group met with Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Gina Lopez and reiterated the same complaint to her and she promised them that this time there will be no "whitewash" in the case but sadly again nothing happened to the issues they were raising.

UFCC president Rodolfo "RJ" Javellana alleges the purchase of equipment not suited to the Philippine setting may constitute graft and corruption.

"We are questioning a total of roughly P1 billion worth of purchases of air quality monitoring instruments or equipment by DENR (in a given period of time) after discovering that these same air monitors were purchased at the gross disadvantage of the Philippine government," Javellana stresses.

Javellana adds his group is also questioning the motive behind the past actions of some EMB officials in deciding to purchase DOAS of air monitors despite evidences gathered that these same air quality monitor types may either be obsolete or was already phased out years ago before DENR purchased them.

"Worst is the fact that we also discovered that most of these expensive air monitor instruments (purchased for nationwide use by DENR) currently are not properly working and some are even not functional anymore. In Metro Manila the air quality monitors in question are not even enough (lacking in numbers) to give a very credible and complete picture or results on the real air quality situation in the national capital region (NCR)," claims Javellana.

Javellana even dares Lopez to initiate a probe together with an independent third party of experts, let us identify, locate and open one by one these

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DENR renews push for waste-to-energy solution to address urban garbage w

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA @jonlmayuga

WITH the failure of the local government units (LGUs) to enforce Republic Act (RA) 9003, or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, an official of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said there is no other way to solve the country's garbage problem but through the adoption of waste-to-energy (WTE) technologies.

Environment Undersecretary for Foreign Assisted and Special Projects Jonas Leones told the BUSINESSMIRROR that, in line with President Duterte's policy direction, the DENR is exploring partnerships in pursuit of WTE projects.

Leones likened WTE to "hitting two birds with one stone." He said it will not only address the garbage problem, but will also help "energize" the country and lessen the country's dependence on coal-fired power plants.

Leones added that the Philippines has been promoting proper waste management since the RA 9003, but with apparent little success. Some local officials, in

While the DENR continues to promote proper solid-waste management as mandated by law, Leones said, the DENR is also exploring partnerships with Japan, and is eyeing 10 new WTE projects this year.

The partnership between the Philippines and Japan for WtE cooperation was set in motion during a visit by Japanese environment officials in Manila last November.

The two countries are eyeing WTE cooperation in Quezon City and Davao City as potential pilot sites and are mulling over 10 more projects this year.

Japan's Ministry of Environment, led by Shigemoto Kajihara, vice minister for global

Energy from waste is in line with Duterte's plan to address the looming garbage crisis in the Philippines, consistent with the DENR and National Solid Waste Management Commission's (NSWMC) plan to promote WTE using advanced technologies that hurdle environmental standards.

"There's already a guideline on WTE. Not all incinerations are prohibited by law," Leones stressed, insisting that there are incineration technologies that comply with dioxin emissions standard.

The President visited Japan last October and brought home 12 major Japanese investments worth P89.73 billion. These investments are expected to generate 250,000 jobs for Filipinos.

The first environment dialogue on waste management between the Philippines and Japan was held in October 2015, wherein both countries agreed to identify model areas to promote cooperation between Manila and Tokyo on waste management.

Since then, joint workshops on waste management between two countries, to deepen understanding of the current situation of waste-management practices in the two countries, were held.

During the dialogue last November, the Ministry of Environment of Japan proposed to provide a comprehensive support, with Quezon City and Davao City as model cities for WTE, together with Osaka and Kitachushu,

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DENR renews push for waste-to-energy solution to address urban garbage woes

to the claims of some non-governmental organizations (NGOs), citing the case of *Metropolitan Manila Development Authority v. JanCom Environmental Corp.*, wherein the Supreme Court stated that "not all incineration violate the law."

"Incineration [technology] that complies with emission standard is allowable," Leones said. He added that over the years, the DENR has been investing on capacity building.

"We now have a laboratory that can measure dioxins/furants," Leones said, referring to a dioxins/furans (D/F) laboratory at the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB).

"In the ruling of the SC, not all incinerations are bad and are prohibited by law," he said.

NGOs, such as the EcoWaste Coalition, stiffly oppose WTE, saying that such technology employs waste incineration, which, it insisted, violates the Clean Air Act.

The EcoWaste Coalition was among the many groups that supported Duterte's appointment of Regina Paz L. Lopez as DENR secretary.

"In our statement in June 2016, we expressed our hope that Gina would opt to join Duterte's Cabinet so she can safeguard our natural resources from wanton destruction and stop peddlers of false climate and waste 'solutions', including thermal waste-to-energy technologies, from making inroads to the new government," said Aileen Lucero, national coordinator, EcoWaste Coalition.

"We expected that the DENR would terminate all undertakings that are in breach of the incineration ban under the Clean Air Act and the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, and suspend the development and implementation of coal power plants in the pipeline and so-called WTE facili-

“Incineration [technology] that complies with emission standard is allowable. We now have a laboratory that can measure dioxins/furants.”—LEONES

yet to rescind the pro-incineration guidelines adopted by the NSWMC, which, she said, brazenly promotes WTE.

"If not repealed, this would open the floodgates for burn or thermal waste disposal technologies, undermining the country's efforts to sustainably address our discards, which could be reused, recycled or composted instead of being incinerated," she pointed out.

"WTE technology that burns discards is like a Trojan horse: it may look state-of-the-art and inoffensive, but, in reality, can be a very costly venture that can cause harm to public health and even to the local economy," Lucero warned.

The EcoWaste Coalition, Stop WTE Alliance and allied groups in environmental and climate justice movement have said that "it will be reprehensible to squander massive amounts of public funds to construct, operate and sustain WTE burners when simpler, job-creating and safer solutions exist as specified in RA 9003, or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act."

"The threat of waste incinerators is more real today than before, especially with the public-relations success of the waste incineration industry to deceptively package WTE as power plants rather than as waste-disposal

"WTE is the most expensive scheme for generating electricity that is costlier to build, operate and maintain compared to coal and nuclear-power plants and the various renewable-energy sources as reported by the US Energy Information Administration," the groups pointed out.

"It will be unconscionable to burn discards, as this will deprive poor individuals and families and small businesses, many of whom form part of the under-recognized and underprotected informal waste sector, of useful materials for recycling-based livelihoods," they said.

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Shooting Straight

By BOBIT S. AVILA

Cebu City's embarrassing garbage problem

With the Christmas Season soon to be over with the celebration of the Magi a.k.a. the Three Kings, in Cebu however, we will only be shifting gears for the up and coming Feast of the Sto. Niño de Cebu. While we would be holding a weeklong celebration for the Sinulog Festival, however



there are only two main events that millions of Sto. Niño devotees would flock to Cebu City, the solemn procession with the original statue of the Señor Sto. Niño that was brought to Cebu by the Armada de Moluccas of Ferdinand Magellan and the rowdy Sinulog Festival on Sunday on the 3rd week of January.

I gathered that certain events of the Miss Universe Pageant would be held in Cebu, I still have to check out the venues and times that this would be held. So we expect a very busy January. However the question to ask is... is Cebu City ready to hold its Sinulog Festival? If you looked at our potholed roads one can say that Cebu City is not ready to hold its Fiesta for the Señor Sto. Niño. If you checked out the traffic congestion on a daily basis, we are barely holding on. These problems are mere starters, the bigger problem can be seen on the streets and sidewalks of Cebu City... our garbage! What a major embarrassment for Cebuanos!

Yes, the biggest problem Cebu City faces today is uncollected garbage made worse by the closure by the Department of Environment (DENR) of the Cebu City Sanitary Landfill. This has never happened to Cebu in the past. More than 20 years ago, I was the chairman of the Infrastructure and Utilities Committee (IUC) of the Regional Development Council (RDC-IUC-7) and at that time, Cebu City needed a place to dump its garbage. With the help of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) we constructed the Cebu City Sanitary Landfill. But this had a shelf life of only 20 years. Somehow it has been extended, but in the end, the DENR decided to shut it down last November with Cebu City totally unprepared to tackle this problem.

This week, the Cebu City Council had to call for a special session to come up with a new contract for a private company to haul the city's garbage out of Cebu City. But for most part of this week, Cebu City residents have been plagued by uncollected garbage where most residents place them on the sidewalks or streets in the most unsanitary way. Unless he fixed the garbage problem soon, Mayor Tomas Osmeña would get the ire of his constituents. Hopefully this week we shall see a solution to this problem.

Meanwhile, the province of Cebu will soon embark on its first Suroy-Soruy Sugbo of the year 2017 heading to the Southern towns of Argao, Boljoon, Santander, Samboan, Ginatilan, Alegria, Moalboal, Ronda and Barili. They call it the Southern Heritage Tour that starts on January 18 to 20th. It's a three-day, two night tour into some of Cebu's nature sites and waterfalls that has become a top tourist destination.

The Suroy Suroy Sugbo was the brainchild of former Cebu Governor Gwen F. Garcia, now Congressman of the 3rd District. This is one lasting legacy of Rep. Garcia that allowed Tourism to include that farthest reaches of the Province of Cebu. Previous to the holding of the Suroy Suroy Sugbo, the famous Cebóoom focused only in destinations found in Metro Cebu. This project brought a new sense of pride of place with many Cebuanos and now we are seeing new tourism destinations south of Cebu City.

* * *

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SEI

Waste watchdog hails phaseout of leaded paints

NON-PROFIT watch group on toxic chemicals EcoWaste Coalition hailed the passing of the December 31 deadline for the completion of the three-year phaseout period for lead-containing architectural, household and decorative (AHD) paints as a "victory for children's health" in a statement this week.

"We welcome the national ban on lead-added AHD paints as their removal from trade and commerce would help reduce a major source of childhood lead exposure and result in healthier kids," said Thony Dizon, Coordinator of the EcoWaste Coalition's Project Protect.

"We congratulate our paint manufacturers for taking steps to reformulate their AHD paint products in compliance with the government's Chemical Control Order (CCO) for lead and its compounds. In fact, Boysen and Davies, the country's top two paint makers have gone 'lead-safe' even before the 2016 deadline," he added.

"We thank the Philippine Association of Paint Manufacturers and their past and current officers for supporting the industry's shift to more eco-friendly paints with no heavy metals and low volatile organic compounds," he also said.

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Administrative Order 2013-24, signed by then Secretary Ramon Paje on December 23, 2013, established the guidelines for the country's shift to lead-safe paints.

Section 4 of AO 2013-24 stated that the "use of lead and lead compounds shall be strictly prohibited in paints with more than 90 parts per million (ppm) threshold limit beyond three years (2013-2016) for AHD applications and six years (2013-2019) for industrial applications."

"The policy is a milestone in the country's efforts to achieve sound management of chemicals and uphold the people's rights

to health and to a healthy environment," Dizon said.

The country's lead paint regulation is also recognized internationally and is among the four case studies featured in the "Toolkit for Establishing Laws to Control the Use of Lead in Paint," along with the policies of the European Union, Uruguay and USA. The toolkit is a product of Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint, which includes the DENR, Pacific Paint (Boysen) Philippines, Inc., and the EcoWaste Coalition among its partners.

"The CCO for lead and lead compounds is further acknowledged as one of the achievements of the Aquino administration in the arena of priority chemicals policy," Dizon pointed out, noting that the last CCO on polychlorinated biphenyls was promulgated in 2004 during the Arroyo administration.

A CCO is a policy issuance on "priority chemicals that the DENR determined to be regulated, phased-out or banned due to the serious risks they pose to public health, workplace and the environment."

"The Duterte administration will be remembered for enforcing the 2016 and 2019 phase-out deadlines for lead-containing paints," Dizon said.

"We thank Secretary Gina Lopez and the entire DENR machinery, particularly the EMB, for ensuring that the phase-out targets are effectively enforced and complied with beginning January 2017," he said.

According to the "National Report on Lead in New Enamel Household Paints" published in 2015 by the EcoWaste Coalition with IPEN (a global civil society network promoting safe chemicals policies and practices), while lead exposure is also harmful to adults, lead exposure harms children at much lower levels, and the health effects are generally irreversible and can have a lifelong impact."

BEN KRITZ



GET THE LEAD OUT Environmental advocates celebrate the December 31 deadline for the final phase-out of all non-industrial paint containing lead. Waste watchdog EcoWaste Coalition said the Philippines' program to eliminate leaded paint has been acknowledged as among the world's most effective. ECOWASTE COALITION PHOTO

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DENR to start dismantling Laguna de Bay fish pens

By ELIZABETH MARCELO

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) will start dismantling fish pens in Laguna de Bay this month, Environment Undersecretary Arturo Valdez said yesterday.

Valdez said the agency would meet with officials of the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) at the latest by next week to identify the

areas where they would start the demolition.

"This is the final meeting. We will definitely start with the demolition this month,"

he said.

Valdez said the operations of fish pens in Laguna de Bay are considered illegal since Jan. 1 after the permits of operators expired on Dec. 31.

"We have imposed a total moratorium on the renewal of permits. This means fish pens can be dismantled anytime," he said.

However, Valdez said they

would give fish pen operators a chance to harvest their produce before dismantling the fish cages. He said some operators voluntarily dismantled their fish pens last month.

He said the DENR would no longer entertain appeals to extend the operations of fish pens "unless President Duterte said otherwise."

Fish pen operators are occupying 13,000 hectares of the 90,000-hectare Laguna de Bay, according to the DENR. The lake's capacity allows only a maximum of 9,000 hectares for aquaculture.

Data from the LLDA showed that there are 1,018 legitimate fish pen and cage operators in Laguna de Bay while 2,261 are unregistered.

SPECIAL REPORT



Laguna de Bay in grave peril

BIÑAN CITY—Bayani Enriquez has happy childhood memories of swimming and fishing in Laguna de Bay in the 1980s. Now, the lake is weighed down by shanties, fish pens, illegal reclamation, industrial pollution, sewage and sedimentation. The challenge is how soon the government can implement its rapid rehabilitation plan before things get worse. —STORY BY MARICAR CINCO

By Maricar Cinco
@maricarcincoINQ

(Last of three parts)

BIÑAN CITY—Bayani Enriquez, 54, grew up by Laguna de Bay in this city in Laguna province. Back in the 1980s, he often spent time with friends swimming or fishing in the lake's unobstructed waters.

But much of the open space is now gone, with shanties occupying the shoreline, he said. It also never occurred to him how the lake, which gave him some sense of calm and security, would become a public hazard.

On Sept. 26, 2009, Tropical Storm "Ondoy" (international name: Ketsana) hit parts of southern and central Luzon, dumping an unusually heavy amount of rainfall (455 millimeters) within a 24-hour period.

It was midday. Enriquez and his wife were going to market when rampaging floodwaters

Rizal, and Metro Manila flooded for months. More than 400 people died and 400,000 lost their homes.

'Ondoy' wake-up call

The massive flood was a wake-up call to the government. At the height of the storm, the water level in the lake rose to 13.9 meters (the normal level is 10 meters). This was the highest since 1972 when the water level reached 14 meters during a storm and submerged most parts of Taguig City. The highest ever recorded was 14.62 meters in 1919.

Then President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo decided to make rehabilitation of Laguna de Bay a "presidential priority."

Toward the end of her term, Arroyo entered into an P18.5-billion lake rehabilitation project with a Belgian company, Baggerwerken Decloedt en Zoon.

The project was supposed to cover the dredging of the 7-kilometer Napindan Channel (the lake's only outlet to Manila Bay), dredging of a 70-km nautical channel, construction of 12 ferry stations, and rehabilitation of wetlands around the lake.

But what would have been one of the country's "most ambitious" flood control projects fell through after President Benigno Aquino III took office in 2010 and ordered the deal shelved.

In a 2011 technical report, Malacanang said the areas to be dredged, in just a matter of three years, would end up silted again because of heavy deforestation and soil erosion.

Expressway dike project

Instead, Aquino announced in 2014 his administration's supposedly biggest public-private partnership: the P122.8-billion Laguna Lakeshore Expressway Dike Project.

The dike would not only serve flood mitigation purposes but also create a 47-km express-

But this, too, did not materialize after the prequalified bidders—Trident Infrastructure and Development Corp. (composed of Ayala Land Inc., Megaworld Corp., Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc. and SM Prime Holdings Inc.), San Miguel Holdings Corp. and Alloy Pavi Han-shin LLEDP Consortium—backed out.

The bidding eventually failed and not a single flood control structure was built.

Rapid rehabilitation

In his first State of the Nation Address in July last year, President Duterte said he wanted issues on watershed destruction, land conversion and pollution in Laguna de Bay abated.

Mr. Duterte handpicked environmentalist and mining opponent Gina Lopez to head the Department of Environment Natural Resources (DENR), the agency that supervises the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA).

But Lopez is not very much interested in dredging and dikes, said environmental lawyer Ipat Luna, environment OIC undersecretary for legal affairs.

"You'll be spending like P11 billion to P18 billion, only for the silt to pile up again after a few months. She (Lopez) does not see that as a long-term solution," Luna said.

A former board member of the private Taal Lake Conservation Center in Batangas province, Luna was tapped by the DENR for a multisectoral rapid rehabilitation plan for the next six years.

LLDA master plan

This plan sits alongside the LLDA's 10-year Laguna de Bay Basin Master Plan 2016 (an updating of the 1995 master plan) described by Luna as "more technical [and] less inclusive."

"[T]he objective of this plan is to make a huge and observable dent in the major problems of the Laguna Lake," Luna said.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

The plan identifies key issues that need immediate intervention. These are the overcrowding of fish pens, illegal reclamation, industrial pollution and domestic sewage, proliferation of water hyacinth, and sedimentation.

"[But] I think an urgent thing to do is to [conduct] a study to see what really is the carrying capacity [of the lake]—not just [in terms] of fish cage absorption but how much agricultural runoff and domestic sewage goes into the lake," Luna said.

During the dry season, the lake's average depth is 2.5 meters (4 meters during the wet season). This is much lower than what it used to be several decades ago when the average depth was around 8 meters, Luna said.

According to the LLDA, the rate of sedimentation increased from 1.03 centimeters per year in 1938 to 1.20 cm/year by 1997. This means that at the rate it is going, the lake could become shallower by another meter in the next century.

On top of those, illegal reclamation contributes to the shallowing of the lake.

In 2015, the LLDA filed 21 cases in the Taguig City Regional Trial Court against local governments for reclaiming portions of the shoreland. The total shoreland area covers 14,000 ha, of which 9,200 ha are in Laguna province, 3,670 ha in Rizal, and 1,130 ha in Metro Manila.

Sabo dams

To arrest the rapidly increasing sedimentation, Luna said the government planned to build sabo dams around the lake.

Sabo dams are concrete structures meant to control debris and large amount of soil flowing into the lake.

Lopez is also considering an "extensive bamboo greenbelt" to absorb excess agricultural runoff and create greenery

An urgent thing to do is to [conduct] a study to see what really is the carrying capacity [of the lake]—not just [in terms] of fish cage absorption but how much agricultural runoff and domestic sewage goes into the lake

Ipat Luna

OIC Undersecretary for Legal Affairs, DENR



DIRTY DIP Children enjoy a dip in the lake, seeming unmindful that it has become a giant septic tank of lakeshore communities.

The LLDA opened two bamboo nurseries in Calauan and Lumban towns in Laguna and had planted 327,235 seedlings as of 2015.

Ecotourism

"Ecotourism is really a function of rehabilitation," said

Nereus Acosta, current LLDA general manager. "How can you open up areas of the lake or the mountains in Sierra Madre, or Talim Island, if the state of degradation makes it unattractive?"

"The estimate is that at least half a million [people] are discharging raw sewage into the lake. The rest of them [may have] septic tanks but [these] are not maintained and [are] therefore discharging raw sewage [into the water]," Luna said.

At least 80 percent of the pollution load comes from domestic waste, Acosta said.

Water quality is consistent Class C (the highest category, Class A is potable), meaning it is suitable only for fisheries and recreation, he said.

and heavy metals and toxic pollutants are present in the water.

Acosta said the Philippines lacked an integrated sewerage system.

In Europe, where there is an integrated sewerage system, he said "not a single drop of urine goes into Lake Geneva." The same goes for Lake Michigan in the United States.

While big water concessionaires Maynilad and Mahila Water Co. Inc. are providing wastewater treatment services, they only cater to concession areas or only about 15 percent of lakeshore communities, Acosta said.

Industries, while required to have their own primary sewage treatment facilities, also violate laws.

In 2015, the LLDA filed charges against 163 companies (out of 5,882 companies monitored) for water pollution.

That same year, two establishments—a fast-food restaurant and a salon—were issued cease-and-desist orders for violating the effluent standards for wastewater discharge.

No relocation

But rather than resort to a massive resettlement program, the government intends to keep the settlers where they are now and build medium-rise houses for them around the lake.

Luna said the DENR planned to implement "strategically efficient and low-cost technologies" like the use of compost

toilets, biochar (charcoal used as soil enhancer), and wetlands to control seepage.

She said the remaining empty spaces on the shoreland would be planted with bamboo, "so even if it looks like a slum now, creating greenery will control the sewage discharges."

"It will be prettier and you will have ecotourism," Luna said.

Under the National Sewerage and Septage Management Program (as mandated by the

NEWS

Pollution, squatting, it hasten death of Laguna



TROUBLED WATERS With the Metro Manila skyline as backdrop, fish pens are among the serious threats confronting Laguna de Bay for

In Laguna, only towns with slaughterhouses and the bigger cities own treatment facilities. In Rizal, except for San Mateo, a concession area of Manila Water, none of the lakeshore towns has its own treatment facility.

"I'm so frustrated that we're building so many roads like there's no tomorrow (yet) we're not building septage tanks. That's just like putting on make-up without taking a shower first," Luna said.

It is now a matter of "delaying considerably" the deterioration for the lake to be used for generations to come, she said.

Presented with the government's solutions, fish pen operators and fishermen welcomed the interventions but cast doubts on their implementation.

Charlie Tan, a fish pen operator at Binangonan town in Rizal, said the aquaculture industry could coexist with eco-

poor fishermen over business and ecotourism.

Acosta said: "To have a business-as-usual attitude and approaches [in solving the problems of Laguna de Bay] is just really going to be unsustainable." INQ



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DENR YEARENDER

Wildlife protection, climate top agenda in 2016

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

The first half of 2016 saw the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) focusing on protecting the country's wildlife and its habitat as well as taking steps to counter the ill effects of climate change.

During the early part of the year, it declared a 612-hectare property in Misamis Oriental's Magsaysay town as a critical habitat for hawksbill sea turtles.

The property brought to more than 6,300 hectares the total area declared protected in Northeastern Mindanao to ensure survival of endangered marine species.

Then environment secretary Ramon Paje said the Magsaysay Critical Habitat for Hawksbill Turtles (MCHHT) is protected from business activities such as quarrying, mineral exploration and extraction, as well as logging.

"This is to protect the nesting sites and population of the critically endangered hawksbill turtle along with other wildlife species listed under Republic Act 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act," Paje said.

The law mandates the DENR to establish and manage critical habitats in areas located within its jurisdiction but outside of the protected areas (PA) listed under RA 7586 or the National Integrated Protected Area System (NIPAS) Act of 1992.

The LFBPS was meant to provide accurate information on the status of PAs covered by the NIPAS Act.

Paje said the technology enabled park rangers and planners to access and share critical information in real time.

The project's system operates a web-based, open-source software called CyberTracker for data collection and the spatial monitoring and reporting tool for data analysis, mapping and report generation.

Data can be transferred to Google maps and other tools for creation of reports and to facilitate decision-making. Decision-makers at the regional and national level can easily access Lawin patrol reports generated at the field level.

Project Lawin was developed by the DENR and the B+WISER or biodiversity and watersheds improved for stronger economy and ecosystem resilience program of the United States Agency for International Development.

In the same month, the DENR marked the celebration of the World Wildlife Day with the unveiling of a

Paje said the statue reminds everyone of the country's support for global efforts against elephant poaching and illegal ivory trade. It now stands at the Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Center in Quezon City, where the headquarters of the DENR's Biodiversity Management Bureau is located.

The statue aims to enhance public awareness and support for worldwide efforts against illegal wildlife trade in compliance with the country's commitment to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES).

The Geneva-based CITES is an international treaty forged in 1973 to regulate commercial trade of certain wildlife species including the critically endangered elephants.

Paris signing

Almost two months later, the Philippines signed the landmark international climate agreement forged in Paris in December 2015.

The signing ceremony for the Paris accord coincided with the global observance of Earth Day on April 22.

Former president Benigno Aquino III authorized Paje to sign the Paris agreement.

At around the same time, a covenant signing on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions was being held at the DENR central office in Quezon City.

Through the covenant, the Philippines vowed to join a global effort to plant 7.8 billion trees that would absorb carbon emitted by industrial plants and vehicles.

Before Paje turned over the DENR leadership to his successor, the agency had imposed a new regulation on the issuance of environmental compliance certificates (ECC) for new mining operations.

The regulation was meant to ensure greater transparency and accountability in the mining sector. Only entities or corporations included in the government-issued mineral production sharing agreement or the financial or technical assistance agreement would be issued ECC.

When Gina Lopez took over as DENR chief, she ordered an audit of the mining operations and monitoring of ISO 14001 certification compliance.

Lopez said all mining companies should be certified in order to make them at par

with global standards. The crackdown on erring mining companies had begun.

Lopez suspended eight mining firms over allegations of environmental crimes, violation of mining laws and non-compliance with the ISO requirement.

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wild life protection - - - - -

These firms are the Zambales Diversified Metals Corp., Benguetcorp Nickel Mines Inc., Eramin Minerals Inc. and the LNL Archipelago, all in Zambales; Ore Asia Mining Development Corp. in Bulacan; Berong Nickel Corp. and Citinickel Mines and Development Corp., both in Palawan, and the Claver Minerals in Surigao del Norte.

The mining audit is composed of 16 teams of technical experts from DENR and other government agencies such as the Departments of Health and Agriculture as well as from civic groups.

Of the 41 metal mines currently operating in the country, 20 failed the audit and have been recommended for suspension.

Of the eight suspended mine firms, seven were suspended even before the audit was conducted and three others were issued suspension orders that were upheld by the audit team.

Eleven companies passed the audit. These are Philex Mining Corp., Rio Tuba Nickel, Atlas Mining Corp., Techiron Res. Inc., Cagdianao Mining Corp., Taganito Mining Corp., Platinum Group Metals Corp., Greenstone Resources Corp., Philsaga Mining Corp., Pacific Nickel Phils. Inc. and Claver Mineral Development Corp.

Lopez said the companies that failed the audit have submitted their explanations. The DENR will review and evaluate these in 2017.

Endangered pangolins

The world's most heavily trafficked mammal

No reliable global population estimates but drastic local declines documented



Diet: ants, termites

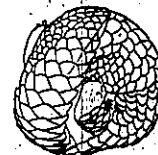
Behaviour: Solitary, nocturnal

Digs long burrows to hunt termites and for shelter

Can climb trees

Good swimmer

Defence



Rolls into a ball

Easy to catch for illegal meat and medicine market

Scales



Made from keratin, the substance that also forms human hair and nails

Sought on the black market for supposed medicinal benefits



Young travel on mother's tail

Increasing demand for their meat and body parts is fuelling illegal hunting

More than 1 million pangolins believed to have been poached from the wild in the past decade

CITES in September banned all international trade in pangolins

CITES Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species

Source: CITES/savepangolins.org/IUCN

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Wild animals out of natural habitats could spread Zika

By ELWYN B. DEVERA

Wildlife officials warned the public from killing or removing wild animals from their natural habitat to control the spread of mosquito-borne diseases, such as Zika virus.

To assist the Department of Health (DOH) in the campaign to control the spread of mosquito-borne diseases such as Zika virus, malaria and dengue, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources through its Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) reiterated the prohibition on the slaughter, removal or eradication of wild animals that feed on and naturally control the population of mosquitoes and other insect pests.

This is also pursuant to Section 27 of Republic Act 9147, otherwise known as the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act, according to BMB Director Theresa Mundita Lim.

Under the law, penalty for killing or possessing wildlife animals include imprisonment of six months and one day to 12 years and/or a fine of 10,000 to P1 million depending on the species involved.

Based on DOH data as of Dec. 23, the number of Zika cases in the country has reached 52, from 33 cases in the previous month. About 65 percent of the reported cases involved females.

Lim explained that natural control agents of mosquitoes and other insect pests include spiders, dragonflies, bats, birds, frogs, house lizards

and geckos.

She added that the protection of natural predators and maintenance of environmental cleanliness can significantly control the spread of infectious diseases.

Zika virus has received worldwide concern because of its alarming connection to a neurological birth disorder and its rapid spread across the globe.



Gecko (Photo credit: Divahay)



MAITUM INFORMATION OFFICE

FARMER STOPPED FROM SELLING JUVENILE PHILIPPINE EAGLE

MAITUM, SARANGANI—Farmer Gibson Badal on Tuesday got the surprise of his life when he saw a large bird in his farm in Barangay Batian here.

As he came closer, the bird, about a meter tall and with blue-gray eyes, did not move an inch. It appeared weak, he said. The farmer decided to bring the bird back to his home in the same village.

The bird turned out to be a Philippine Eagle (*Pithecophaga jefferyi*), a bird-of-prey found in the country's mountainous rainforests and once a prized catch for hunters. The Philippine Eagle has since been declared an endangered species because of its dwindling population.

Upon the suggestion of his neighbors, Badal, 26, said he decided to sell the bird.

But then a resident of another village, who was visiting Barangay Batian on Tuesday, warned Badal it was unlawful to sell Philippine Eagles.

"The bird is a protected species," Alver Caasi, a friend of

half in minutes. Caasi said it took the eagle another day to finish the chicken.

On Tuesday, Maitum Mayor Alexander Bryan Reganit sent a team to Batian to secure the eagle from Badal's care.

Reganit also notified the Philippine Eagle Center in Davao City, whose personnel accompanied the team from Maitum town and brought the raptor to the center.

Edgar Calderon, park maintenance foreman of the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office in Maitum, said the eagle is a juvenile and estimated to be a year old.

He said it could have strayed from other eagles in the forested area of the town, particularly Mt. Busa, and its nest could be within a 5-kilometer radius from where it was found.

Jayson Ibanez, Philippine Eagle Foundation conservation director, said it was not the first time that eagles were seen in the village. He said he saw a pair in Batian, which is within

OSLOB AFTERMATH

NO MORE SWIMMING WITH WHALE SHARKS FOR MISS U CONTESTANTS

By Erika Sauler
@erikaINQ

Following an outcry from wildlife conservation groups, Miss Universe candidates will not be swimming with the "butanding" (whale shark), like what some did in Oslob, Cebu, according to the Department of Tourism. Netizens and environmentalists have criticized the Oslob activity as irresponsible and a bad tourism practice.

But the beauty queens will see another endangered species, the Philippine Eagle, when they visit Davao City on Jan. 19. Malacañang has ordered government agencies and offices to support the Philippines' hosting of the pageant.

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MATAPOSANG
BUTANDING
PHILIPPINE EAGLE
NAMAN!



FROM A1

By Erika Sauler
@erikaINQ

The Department of Tourism has crossed out swimming with the "butanding" (whale shark) from the itinerary of Miss Universe candidates due to outcry from wildlife conservation groups.

The candidates, however, will get to see another endangered species, the Philippine eagle, when they visit Davao City on Jan. 19.

"We've already spoken to the environmentalists who raised their concern and we've told them there won't be anything about the whale shark. It's no longer included," Tourism Undersecretary Kat de Castro said in

a press briefing on Wednesday.

Last, December, about five candidates swam with the whale sharks in Oslob, Cebu, which drew criticisms from netizens and environmentalists.

Greenpeace Southeast Asia and Marine Wildlife Watch of the Philippines hit the activity as irresponsible and a bad tourism practice.

Whale sharks in Oslob are fed to lure them to a spot which make them dependent and vulnerable to poaching and injuries, environmentalist said.

De Castro earlier said that the candidates underwent orientation and followed the guidelines for the marine wildlife interaction, such as not wearing sunblock lotion and staying at least 4 meters away from the whale sharks. INQ

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FROM OUTDOOR ENTHUSIAST TO CONSERVATIONIST

Haribon Foundation wildlife researcher David Quimpo (inset photo) translated his love for the outdoors into an advocacy to conserve the Philippines' ecosystem and its species, such as the Ashy Thrush (large photo), a globally-threatened bird species endemic to the Philippines. PHOTOS BY DAVID QUIMPO/HARIBON FOUNDATION



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Spy Bits

By BABE G. ROMUALDEZ

All mines that give

The country's biggest gold and copper producer, Philex Mining Corp., paid the municipality of Itogon in Benguet close to P30 million in real property tax (RPT), covering a five-year period for a proposed tailings storage facility in the host barangay of Ampucao. According to Philex president Euls Austin, the company has consistently helped in building up communities and in contributing to nation building through its tax payments.

Itogon mayor Victorio Palangdan said Philex has been religious in paying taxes, adding the miner's numerous social and environmental projects have benefited residents. About 50 percent of the real property tax or P15 million will be allocated for the mandated Special Education Fund (SEF), which will be equally divided between the municipality of Itogon and the provincial government of Benguet.

The SEF will be used to build classrooms and other facilities as well as pay for the salary of teachers. In fact, the total amount is more than enough to build 10 classrooms that could each accommodate as many as 50 pupils and pay for the salaries of 200 government employees for four months, according to a company official.

The fact is, Philex happens to be one of the top taxpayers in the mining industry, having contributed to government coffers more than P10 billion in regular and mining-related taxes between 2011 and 2015. The company's lone operating mine in Padcal located in Tuba, Benguet, has paid P6.6 billion or 100 percent of required regular taxes and another P3.5 billion in mining-related taxes since 2011.

At the check turnover for the P29.8 million RPT, Padcal resident manager Manuel Agcaoili reiterated Philex's continuing commitment to responsible mining by fulfilling its tax obligations to both local and national governments. Philex has also spent hundreds of millions for various programs in the area of education, environmental protection, public infrastructure and livelihood for residents in host and neighboring communities.

Itogon and Tuba are two of the four first-class communities in Benguet, and long-time residents said the mining company has made significant contributions in the progress and development of their communities. Philex Mining accounted for P131.5 million or more than 45 percent of Itogon's revenues for 2014-2015.

for the mining industry to assess how improvements could be made to help maximize the industry's contributions to the economy.

Donald Trump 'clones'

The "anti-establishment" fever seems to have caught up in Brazil, judging from the election results in of Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Joao Doria – dubbed as the "Brazilian Donald Trump" because he is a successful businessman, a former host of "The Apprentice Brazil" and is considered a political outsider like the US president-elect – was recently sworn in as mayor of Sao Paulo after soundly defeating the incumbent mayor and the ally of Brazilian president Michel Temer.

Apparently, the people of Sao Paulo – the biggest city and the financial capital of Brazil – have grown tired of politics as usual, with corruption among the biggest issues in the recently concluded elections. The biggest casualty was the Workers Party of former president Dilma Rousseff who was impeached last August for corruption. Even in the poorest neighborhoods of the city – where the disparity between the rich and the poor is most pronounced by the fact that businessmen regularly travel by choppers, while the marginalized live in makeshift shanties – Doria handily won the popular vote.

According to analysts, the election outcome demonstrates the sentiment of ordinary citizens that their interests are not represented by "professional" politicians (or what we call traditional politicians) whose disconnect with the poor have grown in recent years. Voters also see Doria's wealth as an assurance that he will not be tainted or tempted by corruption. His track record as a college professor and businessman also stoked hopes that he would share the wealth of his experience for the benefit of his constituents.

In Rio, a conservative evangelical bishop and senator, Marcelo Crivella, also defeated an ally of Temer – underscoring the deep dissatisfaction of residents for mainstream politicians, many of whom are implicated in corruption scandals that seem to break out every week in Brazil. Crivella certainly has his work cut out for him considering that Rio's coffers is practically empty and could hardly pay its police force and other public employees – with the situation compounded by rampant criminality.

Observers say Crivella's victory also shows a marked turnaround as far as issues like abortion are concerned, because the bishop ran on a platform against the legalization of drugs, abortion and "gender ideology." In fact, Crivella hit the ground running, so to speak, by enacting 78 decrees that would help bring the city back on its feet.

Spy tidbits

My friend, columnist Mon Tulfo, commented on my Dec. 27 column (PNP: Only one gun supplier) about the upcoming bidding for 26,000 pistols for the Philippine National Police.

Although I am a Glock pistol fan myself and, in fact, own one, I have to admit that Mon knows better than I do when it comes to guns. Mon is a known gun enthusiast.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

La Union targets 964 hectares for enhanced greening program in 2017

By FREDDIE C. LAZARO

SAN FERNANDO CITY, La Union – The La Union environment office has targeted a total of 964 hectares from 40 sites for the Enhanced National Greening Program (ENGP) this year.

La Union Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer (PENRO) Maximo Soriano Jr. said the agency has come up a plan in the NGP to attain sustainable development through poverty alleviation, to promote food security, and to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

"For the integrated area development management approach, the target beneficiaries will be fishermen and indigenous peoples," Soriano said.

The ENGP in La Union is a converged effort of the local government units (LGUs), national government

agencies like the Department of Agriculture, Department of Agrarian Reform, Department of Science and Technology, National Commission for Indigenous Peoples, and state colleges and universities.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has allocated a total funding of ₱15 million for the ENGP implementation in the province.

Among those species to be planted for mangrove areas are *bakawan*, *agoho*, *talisay*, *avicennia*, timber (yemane, mahogany) and fruit trees (cacao, coconut, guyabano, among others) for upland and hilly areas. Bamboo will also be introduced to the area.

From 2011 to 2016, a total of 1,942,039 seedlings were planted in 3,853 hectares in 96 sites by 58 peoples' organizations and LGUs.

The PENRO said 57,113 jobs were

generated within the period.

The 13 towns and one city in La Union that were surveyed for this year's ENGP are the following: Sudipen (100 hectares); Santol (120 hectares); San Juan (20 hectares); Bauang (25.5 hectares); Caba (50 hectares); Naguilian (26.5 hectares); Aringay (119 hectares); Burgos (50 hectares); Bagulin (181 hectares); Agoo (162 hectares); Santo Tomas (13 hectares); Tubao (21 hectares); Pugo (65 hectares); and San Fernando City (11 hectares).

Soriano noted that the extended period for the implementation of the NGP from 2016 to 2028 will cover the remaining 7.1 million hectares of unproductive, denuded, and degraded forestlands nationwide which can contribute to environment-related risks such as soil erosion, landslides, and flooding mandated under the Executive Order 193 series of 2015.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SE

Area development, subsidiarity and federalism


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TIMES of crisis are windows for great opportunity. That is an old-Chinese saying. But in these troubling times, (for many), what opportunities indeed lie ahead? There are quite a few and the promising thing is they seem to be opportunities that would open up given current trajectories or the way things are unfolding. Indeed, 2017 may be the year that developmental change finally proceeds.

The world is shifting away from the international policies of recent decades that, while they have created well-being for unprecedented billions of people, have likewise resulted in great tensions. Not just tensions between peoples but tensions between people and their environment and even tensions inside people due to an identity overly linked to consumerism rather than their inherent rhythms; consumerism that threatens the very sustainability of Mother Earth.

One such opportunity is the re-emergence within government of the area development paradigm or development framework under Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Gina Lopez. While Sixto K. Roxas was its initial advocate in the late 1960s it had unfortunately been bastardized in several big government projects that went puff! (just as the autonomous regional experience is going puff!) due to wrongful implementation, which in turn as due to a misunderstanding of what area development is basically about.

With Secretary Gina at the helm of a major government department that has a direct and meaningful role in national development, the area development paradigm is set to take off and this time under the leadership of a capable and knowledgeable environment and natural resources secretary. For one, Secretary Gina has been a practitioner of area development approaching the various undertakings of the ABS-CBN Foundation in Palawan and other provinces wherein the local people were the implementers and the beneficiaries of the eco-tourism projects that simply highlighted the potential of their area (using the term area development).

certainly what the Philippines was (before the times of colonization and industrialization. But alas, development was under the unitary and sectoral paradigm).

Area development deepens this understanding of the fragile but critical relationships between and among interconnected ecosystems and working with the local people applies the principle of subsidiarity which states that functions and decision-making should be undertaken at the lowest possible hierarchical level and the role of the higher organizational level is to support those lower units undertaking the functions.

As Secretary Gina says, "area development is about nurturing and helping the local people nurture their local areas to unleash [their] productive potential". This means making development based on the *potentialities of the area*. This is the better opposite to what has been going on since the Philippines became a country under colonial masters where the desires of the corporations were simply imposed on local areas that suited their businesses. And since business was all that mattered, they generally left the place worse off and, in many instances killing off the ecosystem that the locals could have relied on for sustenance. The zenith of this "devil may care" attitude seems to be the guiding principle of many large mines that decimate the geological and hydrological functions of the ecosystem leaving the locals in perpetual risk and scamming the Filipino people by leaving behind a permanent pit hole of humongous dimensions. It wouldn't be surprising if the economic tab left behind by derelict mines long abandoned by mining companies that have been in turn abandoned by their shareholders are simply dumped on you and me, the taxpayers. Secretary Gina calls this "madness".

Under the principle of subsidiarity, it is government's role to assist local people co-create local sustainable economies based on the perpetual beneficial use of the local ecosystem bounties for even distant future generations. Thus, the shift towards federalism is simply

ecosystem-sensitive area development that gives everyone who wants a chance to participate in the local economy that opportunity.

Thus, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is leading the way by selecting 29 priority areas to demonstrate area development and is enlisting the help of the Sixto K. Roxas Foundation that targets poverty eradication by creating the template of an expanded local social accounting matrix of the value-adding power of the local sectors and how incomes are distributed (or not distributed locally but remitted out of the local area). Secretary Gina wants all programs of the DENR like the National Greening Program, Bamboo Program, Biochar Program, Mangrove Rehabilitation Programs, and Mining Programs to be re-crafted along the principles of area development with its concrete manifestation of viable community enterprises that are networked to build up to scale and demonstrate the opposite of "trickle-down" (*pinatulo*) towards the alternative of "nurturing upwards," or *pinatubo*.

President Duterte seems to be instinctively aware that the ideological lines are not anymore between the "left vs. the right," the old Cold War mentality of these old ideologies (that ironically are united in their *pinatulo* paradigm as both ideologies rely on trickle-down sectors to benefit the locals) but between the primacy of nurturing people and ecosystems versus sectoral corporations (that have grown so large, moneyed and powerful), or in other words "*pinatulo*" vs. "*pinatubo*". Thus, the push for federalism as a government organizational set-up where now, finally, area development can be its favored bride guided by the vow of subsidiarity.

The author, a co-convenor of the Subsidiarity Movement International and the Federalist Forum of the Philippines, advocates for the bottom-up development model as well as proper decentralization, and the strengthening of regional governance. He served for 12 years in the Regional Development Council of

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MANILA BAY DAY FORUM NG DENR-NCR AARANGKADA NA

KASABAY ng pagpasok ng Bagong Taon mga "igan, ang pag-arangkada ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources-National Capital Region (DENR-NCR), kasama ang Manila Bay Site Coordinating and Management Office (MBSCMO), sa pagsasagawa ng kanilang "MANILA BAY DAY FORUM" sa 6 Enero 2017, sa ganap na 1:30-5:00 pm, sa Universidad De Manila-Justice Palma Hall.

Ayon kay Assistant Regional Director Dr. Sofio B. Quintana, Ceso IV ng DENR-NCR: "This is an annual event in which we are reminded of the importance and the decision of the Supreme Court Mandamus Order to clean, rehabilitate and preserve the Manila Bay. The occasion is devoted in promoting activities in the rehabilitation of the Manila Bay and its tributaries and a time to focus public attention on critical issues affecting it."

Inaasahan ang suporta at partisipasyon nang lahat partikular ang mga barangay ng Lungsod ng Maynila, District I - VI. Pangalagaan ang ating kalikasan, isa ito sa ating inaasahan para sa magandang kinabukasan.

Mabuhay po kayo!